

---

**NEW TITLES**


---

*History*

**PERSONAL  
IMPRESSIONS**  
by Isaiah Berlin  
Viking, 1981  
210 pp. \$13.95

An Oxford professor, former diplomat, and respected interpreter of Marx and sundry Enlightenment and Russian writers, Russian-born British philosopher Berlin has observed and conversed with many of this century's Big Names. In 14 subdued essays, he deftly sketches the personalities of, among others, novelist Aldous Huxley, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, Albert Einstein, Zionist Chaim Weizmann, poets Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova, and a few of his eccentric fellow dons. Berlin recognizes that imperfections can be blessings in disguise. Winston Churchill used easily parodied archaic language, but, argues Berlin, his operatic style was just what was needed to convey the Battle of Britain's high drama and spur his countrymen to victory. Berlin, who worked in the British embassy in Washington during the war, never met Franklin D. Roosevelt. But he recalls the President's reputation for ruthlessness in dealing with the "adventurers, slick opportunists, and intriguers" who surrounded him, as well as his offhand, optimistic style. "He had all the character, energy and skill of the dictators," Berlin concludes, "and he was on our side . . . every inch a democrat."

**LAND OF SAVAGERY,  
LAND OF PROMISE:  
The European Image of the  
American Frontier**  
by Ray Allen Billington  
Norton, 1981  
364 pp. \$18.95

At the high point of Comanche courtship, a young brave plunges a knife into his horse's neck, rips out its heart, and touches it to the forehead of his intended squaw. Or so Indian "custom" is portrayed in one 19th-century French novel. James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking tales (1823-41) introduced the hardy U.S. settler and his Indian foes to delighted audiences all over Europe. Soon, countless European authors were penning their own American adventure tales, with

such titles as *Pirates of the Prairies*. Even Goethe planned a novel about the West. The American pioneer portrayed by Germany's Karl May, France's Gustave Aimard, and others was violent and greedy. Throughout Europe, children learned to walk "Indian file" and, in games of cowboys-and-Indians, assumed that the redskins were the heroes. But other Europeans, poor people who had immigrated to the New World, wrote glowing "America Letters" to the folks back home. They praised the frontiersman's fortitude, described with pride their newfound prosperity ("We eat meat three times a day" was a common boast), and touted America as a bountiful new Eden.

**JOHN MARSHALL:  
Defender of the  
Constitution**

by Francis N. Stites  
Little, Brown, 1981  
181 pp. \$11.95

**LOUIS D. BRANDEIS AND  
THE PROGRESSIVE  
TRADITION**

by Melvin I. Urofsky  
Little, Brown, 1981  
183 pp. \$11.95

When John Marshall, a 45-year-old rural Virginia lawyer, became the fourth U.S. Chief Justice in 1801, the Supreme Court was plagued by absenteeism and turnovers. The nation's highest Court was neglected by the press, barely respected by the President and Congress, and virtually forgotten by the American people. Yet, by the time of his death 34 years later, Marshall had transformed the Court into a prestigious branch of government. Marshall "performed much as an Old Testament prophet—reminding his people of their social values and warning of the dangers likely to follow the abandonment of those principles," writes Stites, a historian at San Diego State University. To strengthen the Court's influence, he urged his Associates to turn in unanimous decisions. Marshall firmly believed that the Constitution was "the supreme law of the land"—a judgment he enunciated when the Court overturned a state law for the first time, in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803). But by the 1830s, Southern states were beginning to defy the Court; seeking to hold together both the Justices and the Union, Marshall began postponing controversial cases rather than risk the ire of Dixie's States' righters.

Like Marshall, Louis D. Brandeis (1856–